



The Career Center

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THE JOB SEARCH PROCESS FOR A NATION-WIDE SEARCH

One of the most significant changes in today's job search process which affects people in career transition, is the necessity of knowing where you want to go and what you want to do. It used to be that because you knew you were looking for a job, you would focus on finding job openings. In today's job market you must identify your functional strengths (what you have to offer) and your industry preferences at the very onset of your job search. No longer can you prepare resumes and cover letters that simply present who you are and what you have done. Now they must be marketing materials that clearly communicate to prospective decision-makers what you can do to make a difference for their company.

The following is an outline of steps you could take as you begin your job search.

I. Develop a List of Companies in Your Targeted Field

- A. Decide which broad industries to target based on your prior background, interest, and experience.
- B. Decide what geographical area(s) you want to consider.
- C. Go to the library and find these five issues of magazines or online resources:

- Business Week's "100 Best Small Companies."
- Fortune's "100 Fastest-Growing Companies."
- Forbe's "200 Best Small Companies."
- Inc.'s "100 Fastest-Growing Public Companies."
- Inc.'s "500 List of Most Rapidly Growing Private Companies."

D. Review each of these magazines and print/photocopy information on any companies in your targeted industry. If you are interested in an international job, the larger companies probably have international offices; you can check International Business's "100 Fastest-Growing International Companies."

E. Obtain the address and phone number of the corporate headquarters for each of your targeted companies. Go to their website, find their site map, look for places where they hide the list of officers and their contact information. A common place is their automated email list. Often there will be a search function on the website. Search for the department which interests you the most. You might need to call information [(area code) 555-1212] to find some of the numbers. Try calling the 800 number operator first [800-555-1212] to see if they have a toll-free number.) The Directory of Corporate Affiliates and Ward's Business Listing of Private/Public Companies lists many of these headquarters; ask your librarian for help if you do not find a listing. Go to online resources like Hoover's (www.hoovers.com), Vault (www.vault.com) and WetFeet (www.wetfeet.com) and research the companies.

F. Call the headquarters to find out if they have a facility in your preferred geographic area. If so, ask them to mail you an "investor relations package", or an "annual report" at the minimum. If the company isn't publicly traded, ask for a public relations (PR) packet or a recruitment/employment package. Often this material can be downloaded from their website.

II. Use Other Books and Periodicals To Expand Your List of Companies

A. Talk to a Stockbroker or Reference Librarian to identify books and periodicals that review companies with bright prospects; that is, companies whose "stock is a recommended purchase" by the experts. These are usually companies who:

- are evidencing a 20% growth in new employees per year;
- have greater than a 20% growth in profits over the last three years;
- and (usually) have a new, innovative product/service that is the best or a close second in its market niche.

B. Review the Business section in the local newspapers (also available over the internet) and add any possibilities to your list.

C. If you are open to relocation, review last year's issues of the Investors Business Daily, of the Wall Street Journal Transcript and add any company in your focused industry whose prospects look bright.

D. Call one of the financial newsletters listed in Hulbert's Guide to Financial Newsletters. Ask to be sent a sample, and add their recommended stock buys in your industry to your targeted list.

III. Identify Other High Growth Companies - Have annual reports sent to you for the small aggressive-growth and industry-specific or select-industry mutual funds. Review the list of stocks purchased for your industry segment in the annual report and add those companies to your list of possibilities.

IV. Call Stockbrokers - Ask for their recommended "Buy Stocks" in your industry.

V. Conduct Your General Networking

A. Research both horizontally and vertically for contacts. Horizontal contacts are those contacts who are in the same or similar industry. Vertical contacts are those people to whom you would *provide* products or services, or from whom you would *purchase* products or services. Get creative developing vertical contacts. Most people find more vertical contacts than horizontal ones. Don't limit yourself to the BUSINESS contacts; brainstorm the vertical contacts you have in your personal life as well (dry cleaners, hair dressers, day care centers, etc.).

B. Add any customers, suppliers, vendors, or competitors of the companies you've discovered in your research who might be doing well. If you don't know how they are doing, add them to your list and call their headquarters for an investor or public relations package.

C. Look up on the internet or call the Chambers of Commerce and Economic Development Groups in the towns that interest you. Ask for the industrial recruiter who is responsible for talking to new companies, and request his/her help. Does he/she know of any fast-growing companies in the area?

D. Determine whether your target industry has an annual trade show. If so, this is a good source of contacts. Make plans to attend. Ask for a copy of the attending companies and try to match the list with your targeted companies. Don't expect to have serious interviews for jobs. Your goal is to network and set up "meetings" (not interviews) for the future. Introduce yourself with the goal of discovering the needs, problems, and challenges of the company, learn anything you can and collect business cards to make future contacts easier. You are still only researching and evaluating. Successful job hunters do not spend the majority of their time chasing down jobs where the competition is intense, or where the company is not stable or growing.

E. Call the alumni office and ask what alumni information they have on employers. Call those in your industry for advice.

VI. Rank Your Choices

A. Obtain enough information (number of employees, sales, primary products or services offered, and key decision-makers) to rank the companies A - Definite Fit, B - Possible Fit or C - Not of Interest. You need only enough information to determine whether each company can be ranked as an A, B, or C. There is no sense in doing in-depth research on a company, only to find out that they see no point in talking with you. Learn enough about the company to determine IF they are a good target. Save the in-depth research for when you get an *interview*. Is it as big as you'd like? Are its sales revenues and net income increasing? Does it have a unique product? Is it in a location you would like?

B. Many job hunters start by looking in the phone book for local companies in their targeted field. Call for an information packet and get the Reference Librarian to help you find information on the company. The library will have any published articles and annual reports. However, you may be able to access information more quickly over the internet or by calling the company direct.

C. Compile your list of targeted companies:

- A's -- companies that interest you the most;
- B's -- companies you might want to pursue later;
- C's -- companies to drop or eliminate.

D. Work on your A's in alphabetical groups of between four and ten at a time unless they rank themselves for you in another way, such as location or fit with your background. Go to the library and find any articles written in the last three years, copy them, and bring them home to read. Create a file for each company.

VII. Start Using the Telephone

A. Obtain the name of the decision-maker over your area of expertise and their correct mailing address.

B. Talk to the customer service or public relations department about the company's products or services.

C. Talk to a customer who currently is using their products or services.

D. Talk to a sales representative.

E. Talk to a dealer or distributor and ask if you can evaluate the product personally.

VIII. Contact the Decision-Maker at Targeted Companies.

A. Put together a customized cover letter that highlights your functional strengths, briefly describes one or two of your accomplishments, and presents the ways in which you could benefit the company. Mail it along with a copy of your resume to the decision-maker (NOT the HR department).

B. About four days after you mail the letter (seven if sending it out of state), call the decision-maker. Follow these steps in making each call:

1. Share your background and find a common ground to establish a relationship.
2. Ask a series of probing questions that will identify the needs, problems, and challenges of the company/department.
3. Provide stories that relate how your past accomplishments are relevant to the company's needs.
4. After at least 5 minutes (but no more than 20 minutes), suggest that you would like to get together face-to-face to talk about these issues in more depth and offer two specific days in the near future when you could meet with them. ("I would really like to get together with you face-to-face to talk about this in more depth. I'll be in your area over Spring Break. Would Tuesday, March 16th or Thursday, March 18th be better for you?") Set a specific time for a MEETING (not an interview).

C. If after five unsuccessful attempts to reach the decision-maker, spaced over the course of the day, leave a message. If after leaving messages for three days in a row, the decision-maker still won't call you back, ask the assistant or secretary for help. Try to schedule a time in the decision-maker's calendar for another telephone conversation. Rejection is hard to take, but hang in there. In most cases, hiring managers are not disinterested, they are just busy.

D. Proceed with a phone conversation. Ask for a next step. Uncover any concerns the hiring manager might have. If there isn't a possibility of a position now, ask whether he/she thinks there might be one in the next year.

E. If you are unable to meet with the decision-maker, ask for referrals to other people with whom you can speak -- people in other departments within the company, in a competitor's company, or perhaps customers who may be interested in someone with your talents.

VII. Keep Yourself in the Running After a Meeting.

A. After your meeting with the decision-maker, put together a three paragraph "After Interview Thank You" letter in which you thank him/her for taking the time to meet with you to emphasize:

1. What you can do to make a difference, in light of the problems you identified;
2. Those aspects of your background that seemed of particular interest;
3. Your sincere interest in being a part of this "team".

B. Tell the decision-maker that if you haven't heard from him/her in about ten days, you will call back to see "how the hiring process is going."

C. If after about ten days you haven't heard back, call to reaffirm your interest. It is important to keep your name in the forefront, and look for an opportunity to get together for another meeting. Express your interest in discussing in more depth ways you could help solve their problems or bring about needed change.

D. Keep checking back until you receive a definite yes or no. Ask how often you should check (they might be interviewing other candidates). If you are not being scheduled for a second interview, your chances at this point are small, so get your campaign back in high gear and continue your job search.

E. Sometimes the company is just not able to create a new position and must wait until the new budget. In that situation, the time it will take to generate an interview will be longer. If you get the impression that they are interested and do want to hire you but cannot do so at this time, look for ways to stay in contact. For example, you might fax a copy of a recent article you found in the library (a "just-thinking-of-you" fax).

F. **STAY IN TOUCH.** Call and check about once a quarter. If you haven't had any success after a year, drop them from your list.